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AGENT X
PART 1 OF 2!
READ THIS OR WE'LL KICK YOUR GUTS OUT!
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AGENT X

FAX COVER SHEET

FAX TO: BEVERLY LACOCO FROM: KENNY LIEBMAN (THE HOODED EYE)

DATE: May 23, 2003 RE: AGENT X

YOUR NOTE HERE

Bev –

Good news, sweetie!

I think I may have found someone to take care of "you-know-who" for us.

I just got off the phone with The Shiv, and while he told me The Taskmaster is no longer taking on fieldwork, he is in contact with an outfit called Agency X that provides similar services, no questions asked. It's a small independent with two operatives, Sandi Brandenberg and Alex Hayden (a.k.a. Agent X. How tacky is that?). Brandenberg has mainly worked on the sidelines but is said to be smart, dependable and trustworthy. Hayden's their main triggerman, apparently obnoxious as hell but also highly efficient and tenacious. And his ability to heal rapidly from severe injuries is a real plus given our particular target. Despite a puerile sense of humor and god-awful taste in music, he comes highly recommended. So, I think we should give them a try. I agree with you that we shouldn't use anyone local; given the upcoming election it might cause too many problems if things went wrong.

The Taskmaster isn't on the best of terms with X at the moment, but The Shiv thinks he'll play ball considering the money we're offering. I don't think we should give him too many details about "you-know-who", considering how hard it's been to get anyone to agree to come out to Delta City. If Agency X is as good as their press, they'll figure out a way to deal with our (little problem (and then we'll deal with them, of course).

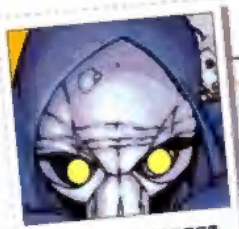
If all goes well we could get them out here within a day or two. I've already bought a bottle of champagne.

Love,
Kenny XOXO

P.S. I also spoke to the Doctor today – he's fairly optimistic the operation can proceed sometime this fall. Fingers crossed, baby – this is going to be our year!
P.P.S. Don't forget, dinner tonight with the Mayor. Wear your white dress. You know which one.

AGENT X

SANDI BRANDENBERG



THE TASKMASTER

FRANK
"YOU KNOW WHO"

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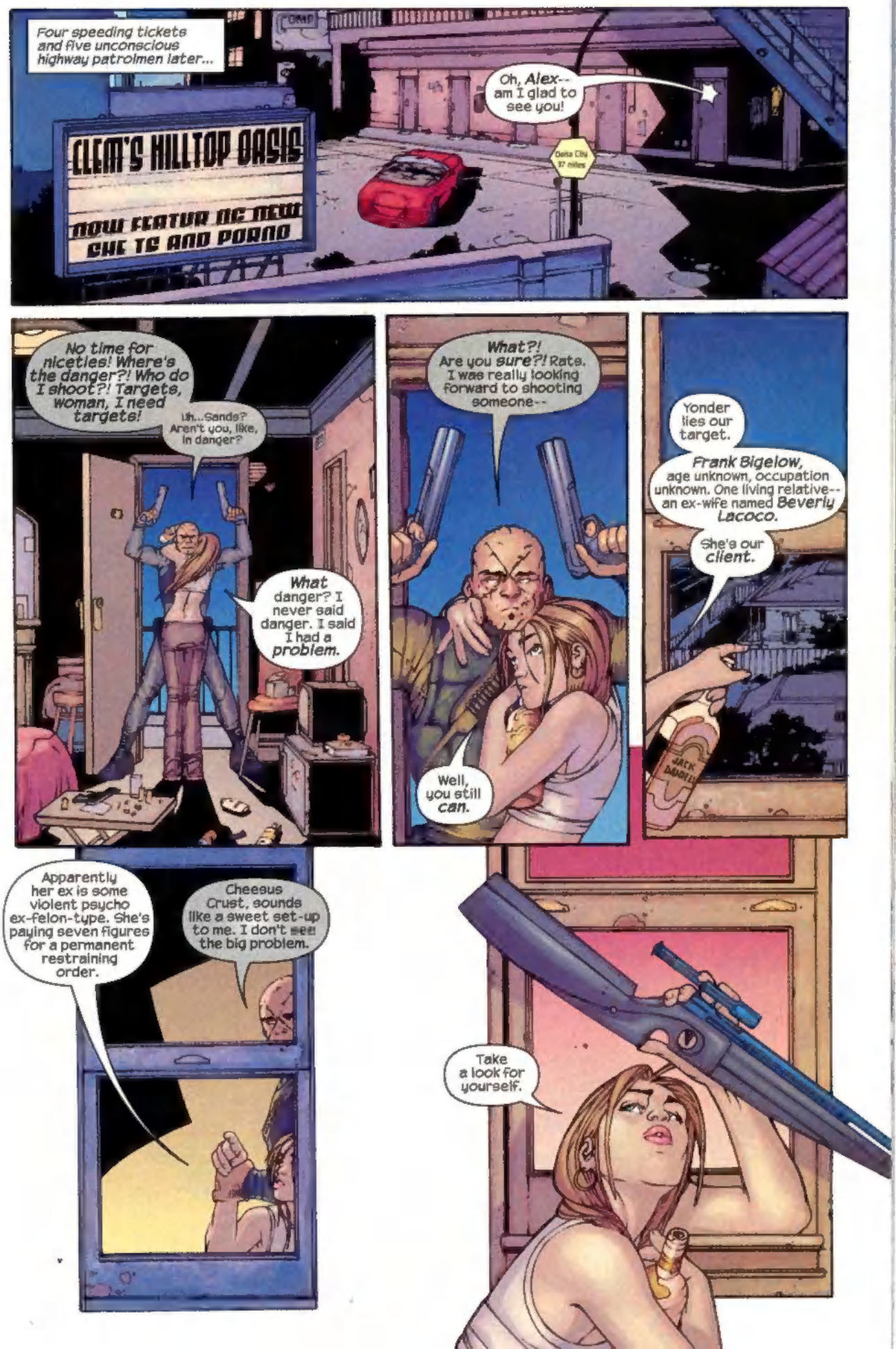
MATHEMATICALLY, THE LETTER "X" STANDS FOR AN UNKNOWN OR VARIABLE QUANTITY. BUT IN THE DANGEROUS WORLD OF THE MODERN-DAY GUN-FOR-HIRE, IT STANDS FOR ALEX HAYDEN, THE MAN WITH NO PAST. UNINTERESTED IN THE MYSTERY OF HIS OWN BEGINNINGS, AGENT X IS DETERMINED TO TAKE HIS POSITION AS THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST, AND HIGHEST PAID, MERCENARY...
AGENT X
IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...
DIE, DIE AGAIN!
Honeeeey, I'm home!
Sorry I'm late!
I had a rough day at the office!
Writer-Evan Dorkin
Pencils-Juan Bobillo
Inks-Marcelo Sosa
Color-Chris Chuckry
Letters-Cory Petit
Editor-Andrew Lis
Editor in Chief-Joe Quesada
President-Bill Jemas

Say, you're not honey. You're not even a bit o'honey.
You're the Taskmaster, America's least-favorite overcompensating action parasite and all-around manipulative dirtbag!
Alex? *hic* --Jeez, what the hell happened to you?
I mean, not that I really care, but you look like crap. Smell like it, too.
All in the line of duty, Tony.
FLUFF
You can tell our client there really was a Chupacabra death cult performing sacrificial rituals down by the reservoir.
Man, they had it all going on! Blood rites, chanting, virgins, a big, scary monster --did I mention they had virgins?
Boy, you should have seen them virgins. They were so...virginal.
HSSS
I would have been back sooner but I got my favorite foot hacked off during the highly exhilarating and extremely violent denouement.
666
Took a while for my healing factor to grow it back. I like the fit and the color but the toes aren't as perky as my old ones--
Cut the melodrama, Hayden. You probably just crashed another car--
Oh, you don't believe me, huh? Well, as the Rosicrucians used to say--
--The proof is in the icky-pooey burlap sack!
SPLURRK!
MREEEOWR!
Isn't he de-lovely? I've named him Mr. Pookums, and I'm keeping him, no matter what the neighbors say!

So what are you doing here, anyway? I thought you turned your keys in three hissyfits ago.
-- Coff - Coff - My cable's out. Sandi said I could watch the Ultimate Fighting pay-per-view over here while she was on assignment.
-- oooh, and there goes shimuni's neck!
Oh, I see-- waitaminnit! On assignment?! What'choo talkin' 'bout, grimace?
Did you hear that, Pan? Like a dry chicken bone!
I'm talkin' about a job, a hit. Now can I *hic* watch my violence in peace, please?
Why, you numbskull-headed--! Sandi isn't an assassin! She's like, assassin helper! What are you trying to do, get her killed --?
Hey, I didn't make her go, she wanted to. You weren't here, you didn't call in, and the pay-off was too good to lose --
Yeah, well, I couldn't call in.
Why not?
Monster ate my phone.
That's it! I've had it up to here with you treatin' me like I'm some kind of chumpbag substitute teacher!
I trained your ass, freakmeat! You show me some respect or I'll beat it out of you!
Okay, one question first.
This fight we're about to have-- is it because you're still hung up on Sandi, because you hate my guts, or because you're a major dillweed ripe for plucking?

Ow. Figures it was all three--
THRAKK
THRAKK
Tsk tsk Taskmaster, copying moves off the boob tube?
For shame, Doc, for shame--
--no more TV for you tonight!
WUHUFF!
SPEESH
You mother--! I'm gonna slice you into moron sashimi--
Yeeeoow! My obliquus externus! Hurty hurt hurt! Ooh, just wait'll I get me a knife, you--
K-RACK
BREEP BREEP
Uh... Alex... I think your goatsucker's ringing.
BREEP
BREEP

Hey, look! It's Operation, the wacky mad doctor game!
Hmmm, take out-- wrenched--
BREEP BREEP
--cell phone!
See, stupid?! I wasn't lying!
BREEP
Agency X! We liquidate while you wait, walk-ins our specialty!
Glarrf!
Alex?!
Sandi? Hey, we were just talking about you! Guess what? Tony broke your TV--
Alex, not now! Listen, I ran into a problem with the job - I-I need help--
KLIKSKKK!!!!
Hello? Alex?
Bad phone! Ahh, I knew I should've gone for the plan that covered goat sucker blood!
FSSSSSS
Hey, Taskmistress! Get up! We got us a damsel to un-distress!
Not me, man I can't even get up.
You broke my freakin' leg with the T.V.!
Oh. Well, sorry to beat and run, but judging from the caller I.D., I've got a drive ahead of me. Sure hope the Taskmastermobile has a full tank.
Hey, you can't take my--!
SLAM
You're just lucky I was half in the bag celebratin', Alex! Otherwise I'd be savin' Sandi an' you'd be lying here with- with-
Oh, good lord, Kitty! Bglurk! -choke-!
MUNCHETY -MUNCH


Four speeding tickets and five unconscious highway patrolmen later...
CLEM'S HILLTOP OASIS
NOW FEATUR NC NEW CHE TS AND PORNO
Oh, Alex-- am I glad to see you!
Delta City 37 miles
No time for niceties! Where's the danger?! Who do I shoot?! Targets, woman, I need targets!
Uh...Sands? Aren't you, like, in danger?
What danger? I never said danger. I said I had a problem.
What?! Are you sure?! Rats. I was really looking forward to shooting someone--
Well, you still can.
Yonder lies our target.
Frank Bigelow, age unknown, occupation unknown. One living relative-- an ex-wife named Beverly Lacoco.
She's our client.
JACK DANIEL'S
Apparently her ex is some violent psycho ex-felon-type. She's paying seven figures for a permanent restraining order.
Cheesus Crust, sounds like a sweet set-up to me. I don't see the big problem.
Take a look for yourself.

Look at him! Have you ever seen anything so pathetic?
I mean, he's sleeping with a teddy bear, for God's sake!
I just couldn't do it. I locked, I got loaded, and I still couldn't do it.
I'm sorry, Alex. I really wanted to show you I could keep up with those other hottie-shots--
The hoo-wha--? Sandi, what are you talking about?
Please, I've seen the way you look at Outlaw when she shoots somebody.
Hey, what can I say, I'm only human! People shooting people turns me on. And if the shooter's gots hoo--
Ooooh, I knew it! God, I feel so stupid! Why can't I just murder someone in cold blood!?!
Would you calm down, crazy lady? Here, I'll do it.
Oh, Alex, thank you! I swear I'll whack the next one, whoever it is. A kid, a nun...
Wh-what's the matter? Did he get up to use the can?
No, it's-- it's that damned teddy bear! He keeps looking at me with those big shiny shoe-button eyes!
Tell you what. How about we do it together? That way we can both share the guilt afterwards.
Really? You mean it? Oh, Alex, I'd love to!

You okay? I don't want this to hurt when the recoil kicks in.
I'm just fine.
Uhh, Sands... you gotta look at the target.
I am.
Fire away.
CHUNT CHUNT
Uhhh--
SPAK!
SPAK!
THRUP
Looks like you nailed him, stud.
Now how about me?
L-look, Sandi...is this something really and truly wonderful happening or is it just the booze talking?
I mean, I'm more than willing either way, it's just--
Y'know, Alex, for a man of action--
--you talk too damned much.

BREEP BREEP
Alex--
Went to collect our ill-gotten booty. Let's play "who wants to do a millionaire" when I get back!
To my X
-S
No, Mr. Pookums... lemme sleep... huh?
BREEP BREEP
--Yawn --Agent SeX-- er, I mean--
Alex, listen to me! I'm in real danger now. I mean, really real serious cancer capital-D Danger!
Now hold on, Sandi, you can't possibly preggers yet... can you?
didn't kill Bigelow, Alex. When I left he still lying there, but he's not dead--
What--?! Hold on--
Ohhh, snap! No corpus delicti! This is not good...
Agent X? This is Beverly Lacoco.
My ex-husband was supposed to be in the ground right now, not returning empties at the local Sav-mart.
If he's not dead by midnight, your friend here will be. Capisce?
You listen, to me, lady! You much insult her outfit and I'll put enough lead in your to keep two coroners busy for thre weeks! Ygot me?!

You're in no position to make threats, little boy. Now run along and do your job.
And don't forget--
"--us girls are counting on you."
Razza frazzinnn jassafras...
Don't you worry, Bevvy, I'll do me some killing. Only I might not stop with your ex.
I don't [redacted] how he survived three to the head, but [redacted] ain't duckin' the next fifty.
So long, Mr. Bigelow, we hardly--
--knew you.

Mr. Troublesome's Troublewrench? The Polka Doctor's hypno-hate wheel? What the hell is all this junk!?
Eh --?
K-CHAKK
Polka Doctor
Huh--?
Frank Bigelow! For the sake of my sex life - you must die!
No, wait--!
BRRRRTTT
FAP
FAP
FAP
FUP
Ooh! Ahh! Ack! Yipe! Ouch!
Hate to tell you, but I'm bulletproof.
Y-yeah-- coff-- I kinda noticed when, y'know, the bullets sort of-- coff -- bounced off you and turned me into a leaky diaper. By the way...mind telling me why the se#&! you're bulletproof?
Why?

Because, I'm--
FIGHT
Excuse me? I, uh, don't think I heard you right. Y'see, the severed arteries here [redacted] affecting the blood supply to my brain.
I'm Fight-Man! I'm a superhero. Well, ex-superhero. Didn't whoever hired you tell you that?
No, I had no idea you were a big geek in a Lone Ranger mask and a Kevlar vest.
[redacted] that any of that crap's gonna [redacted] you this time!
Adios, "Fight-Man"! See you in the funny papers!
CRINK
Soooo, I guess you are a superhero! How about that, huh?
Need even more proof?
...gask...

See? I kicked all their evil asses up and down Delta City! Even the ones that didn't have asses
Then I took their stuff and sell it on E-Bay!
Radio Head
This entire collection you see before you is a living testament to the power and the glory that was Fight-Man!
Except for the hummels. Those were my parents'.
So, hotshot, how come you're not a superhero any more? Lose your license?
Well...I, uh, kind of went to prison.
Wicked! What for, steroid abuse?
Nah, nothing like that. Basically some people got all bent out of shape after fourteen of my teen sidekicks got killed.
I mean, hell, things happen when you fight crime, am I right?

They charged me with wrongful death, endangering a minor, destruction of public property, flying while intoxicated...
It was all politics, though. I wasn't flying drunk-- I was hovering drunk! There's a difference!
It's a parole violation if I go near any kids or use my powers. That's why I'm an ex-superhero.
Yeah, well, you're not the only [redacted] with problems, pal.
Your ex-wife's going [redacted] kill my partner and potential love interest at midnight, unless I kill you first.
Aw, Bev...not again.
Pretty messed up, huh? You [redacted] see [redacted] spot I'm in--
Well...I guess you'd better kill me, then.
You're not serious, [redacted] you?
What [redacted] I got to live for? My ex-wife wants [redacted] dead, my parents died while I was in jail, no [redacted] will hire me, my super-villain memorabilia isn't selling...
If I didn't have a code against killing I'd have committed suicide months ago. At least this [redacted] I'd go out doing something sort of heroic.
I gotta warn you, though. I'm pretty indestructible. Bigger [redacted] you h[redacted] tried to kill me. I mean, way bigger, sixty feet bigger.
Don't worry, Frank. I'm a professional. As [redacted] I stop bleeding, you're toast. I guaran-damn-tee it!

1:42 P.M.
BRRRRMM
BRRRRMM
BRRRRMM
SCREEEEE
SMASH
Crime Rate!!!
See? I told you.
--cOFF - cOFF-- That was just a warm up. Just you wait, Hercules--
Everybody runs
We'll have you dead in no time!

3:09 P.M.
Nope.
TNT
4:57 P.M.
Acid
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
6:25 P.M.
Well, that didn't work.
duh. Let's get outta here before the electricity cops show up.
7:04 P.M.
Speeds
Cranks
Explosive
Dies
Reacts
Shrinking off head
My guess is you don't make much off this assassination thing, do you?
Oh, just shut up and die, willya?
SHHHUKTA
SHHUK

7:18 P.M.
EEEEEEAAAARGGH!
OWWWOOWOWOW!!
MY HAIR! MY HAAAIR!
Get away from me you flaming idiot!! You're gonna--
B-THOOM
Tch. That stupid Fight-Man.
Man, I sure do wish someone would up an' kill that boy already.
I think my spleen's on the roof. No joke. I saw it. Bam. Spleen on the roof.
SNIFF
SNIFF
Saaay, you know what this reminds me of?

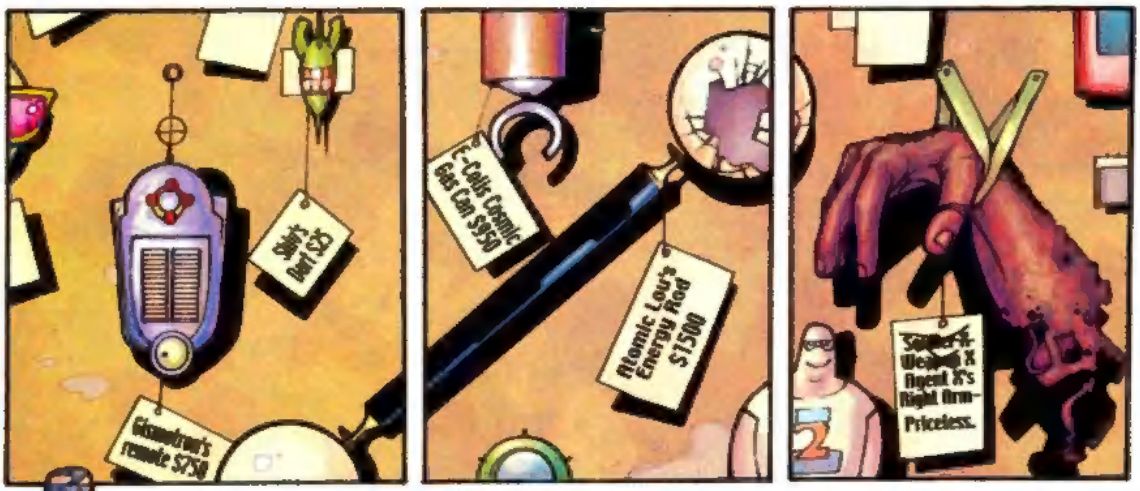
FAT SAL'S WHOPPER
--all I know is one day, I woke up with super-powers, and ever [redacted] then nothing's gone right for me.
I mean, my [redacted] sucked before that, but [redacted] it sucks more powerfully, y'know?
I can imagine. Being around you is more dangerous than riding shotgun with Dirty Harry. I'd walk from this mess if it wasn't for Sandi.
She means a lot to you, huh?
Well...yeah. Funny, you spend so much time around someone, and never realize how much they mean to you until you sleep with them.
You get so caught up with the day-to-day, y'know? Eating, sleeping, blowing people's brains out--you lose sight of what's important in life.
SALE
Well, you know what they say. "Life's a bitch."
Yeah. And so's my ex.

HA HA HA HA HAA HA HA HA HAAA

Well, Frank, we'd [redacted] get going if we want to bury you by midnight.
Garcon! Le cheque du crap, por favor!
SNAP SNAP

9:20 PM
Ready?
-Ump - yeah.
Well...take care, man. It was good knowing you.
Yeah, likewise --
SHOVE
KRA-
KA-
KRAKK!
Ouyy
K-RESH
Yey

You okay?
Who, me? Never been better.
Do me a favor, though, huh? Help me find my arm?


Atomic Lou's Energy Rod $1500
Agent X's Right Arm- Priceless.

Was that a death belch?
-BUURRRRRP-!
Nah. I just feel lousy. Can you die from lousiness?
If you could, every lawyer, politician and comic shop owner would be cloggin' the graveyards.
Dammit! Nothing personal, Frank, but we got less than an hour to whack you before they do something to Sandi!
C'mon, man, think! How do they kill big dumb monsters like you in the movies?
-Crunch - Bey don't. Guyv rike me awways come back inna sequel. Y'know, - kkrunch - Govvilla, Fankenfein, Feddie Kreuu -ahoo--ahukk - !! -gaaak -!!

HUHK! HAHUHK!
Frank? What's the matter? You're turnin' redder than the devil's spanked ess!
I don't believe this! I got the big meatloaf ready to cook and some kind of stupid Jiminy Cricket feeling inside me is telling me not to turn on the gas!
WUUUH- HUUHHK!
Why am I even worked up over this? I have to think of Sandi!
HK! HK! GASP
Aw, nuts. I know I'm gonna regret this in the morning.
BLOOOEEARGHH!!!
THUMPF
Actually, I'm regretting it right the hell now.
-COFF- whu-- why'd you do that? I could've died maybe!
Yeah, well, it just didn't seem right. You're a dumb jerk and a loser but I've gotten to kind of like you while trying to bump you off.
Gee, Alex. Thanks. I think.
So what do we do now? Y'know, about Sandi?
I dunno. I'll figure something violent out.
But first I gotta wash this pork rind, peanut and poison pre-chew off my cabeza before it sets into a death mask.

Hey, uh, Frank? You happen to know any robots?
What? Robots?
Hell, I know about fifty robots, an' all but one of them are pure evil. Why do you ask?
Oh, no reason--
--Just curious!-- urrk --
Next! Agent X And Fight-Man VS. Delta City! Be there or we'll kick your guts out!